

# The Parish of Christchurch

*The Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Christchurch  
St George, Jumpers • St John at Purewell*



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*"We plough the fields, and scatter the good seed on the land, but it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand."*

Dear Friends

This weekend our parish, along with many others throughout our country, will celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving. For as long as I can remember, this has been one of my favourite Sundays in the Church year. The bible passages chosen to be read during our Services always seem to reflect the love that I believe God holds for us all, the prayers offered speak of our gratitude for this freely given love, and the words of our hymns and their musical settings, are perhaps the most uplifting of any that we sing in praise and thanksgiving for this gift of this love. In recent years there seems to have evolved a difference between the traditional hymns sung and much loved by many Church congregations, and then the more modern Worship songs preferred by others. But at Harvest time I am glad to say, the traditional hymns that we have all associated with a Harvest Festival are still sung by all, and learned and loved by young and old alike.

I have to admit that I was rather concerned that not being able to hear these wonderful hymns being sung this year, given the current restrictions, would detract from our Harvest Services, but I was obviously not the only person who had thought just that. So I am delighted to be able to write in this letter that during the 10.00am Eucharist in the Priory, available later in the day on line, our choir will sing three of our favourite harvest hymns on behalf of us all. It still won't be quite the same I know, but it is a start and I am sure will be an uplifting encounter for us all.

For the last few years, as a parish we have supported a charity associated with assisting our fellow human beings who live in areas of the world where the harvest has failed and where fresh water and vital foods required for survival, are both in very limited supply. Our television news programmes and newspaper articles quite rightly lead, and are dominated by the impact the corona virus is having on all aspects of our daily lives. But sadly as this is a daily imperative, other worthy and worldly news items have fallen further and further down the running order of such news bulletins, and many have disappeared altogether. This tragically includes the fact that many people in the year of our Lord 2020 still lack the most basic items required for survival. Sometimes when we do see the suffering that people in other parts of the world live in and through, we find it hard to fully comprehend just how desperate their plight really is. It is not so much as we are blind to such suffering, but rather I think, because we have not experienced ourselves such deprivation first hand, it can be hard, and yes painful, to allow our minds to dwell on the fact that others endure this as a daily reality.

The situation is very different when we read or learn that poverty and deprivation is also a daily reality for those living in our own local communities, and even on our very doorsteps. The collections that we have made for the Christchurch Foodbank Plus have always proved to be the most generous and are testimony to the fact that we are not willing to stand by and do nothing at all when genuine need is becoming the norm rather than the exception in our own Town. We know that many local families are struggling to

adequately feed their loved ones, and that more and more people are having to turn to the foodbank simply to survive and to keep their family together. So this year, this harvest time, we as a parish are coming together with other local Churches and support networks to support the foodbank in our Town. Heidi has taken the lead on our behalf in such planning and she writes:

*As a Parish this Harvest we want to support Christchurch Foodbank and send over lots of needed food for the coming season... The foodbank does vital work in our community, and since Covid came they have given food to feed well over **4000 mouths**. They rely fully on donations for their amazing work, and often at this time receive many harvest donations through schools and groups. Unfortunately many are unable to do collections so therefore both the Priory church and St. George's church are open this Sunday from 2 pm – 5pm where people can come and drop off donations as part of our Harvest festival. There will be opportunities to take part in our special prayer areas, sharing thank you prayers and praying for hope. Do tell your neighbours/ friends etc so hopefully together we can collect loads of food! If you would prefer to make a financial donation directly to Christchurch Foodbank+, you can do so by bank transfer to 40-52-40 a/c 00015300 using the reference CBFood.*

*It's good to be grateful for what we have at this time. One of our prayer areas is sending a thank you prayer via text message which will be added to displays of all the thankyou!! (they will be kept anonymous)– So if you are unable to come by in the afternoon ...**you can join in from home.....** send your thank you prayers via text message to; **07521 498720** ( your phone number will not be stored ). Let's get collecting food and thankyou!*

So as we recognise once again this weekend that, “All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above” and as we “then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love,” may our prayer be that we may live that message of love by acting together to ensure that everyone, no matter where in the world they live, will have sufficient food to eat and fresh water to drink and at the same time, such poverty and inequality would be vanished as we learn to share the harvest gifts freely sent to us by God to share with each other.

With my love and my Prayers

Richard.

**The All Souls Requiem** will take place at 10.00am on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> October in the Priory. Please do feel free to let other people you know, especially those who have lost someone close to them during the last year, of this special Service. A warm welcome will await them all.

**Freewill Offering Envelopes.** Ian Nelemans our Planned Giving Officer states that the new sets of blue envelopes are now ready for collection from both The Priory and St George's. The blue envelope scheme allows Parishioners to donate in weekly envelopes from October to September.

**Parenting for Faith.** There is still time to book your free place on the Parenting for Faith starting this Tuesday evening on zoom. The course is for anyone who influences children and teens, whether you're a grandparent, godparent, parent, carers, friends...this course is for anyone who wants to support a child or teen in their spiritual development. It is on zoom, so you can join from your sofa! There are 8 sessions in total happening fortnightly, with a break in December. The evening consists of watching a video together, then splitting into smaller groups to reflect and discuss. Book your free place, [heidi@christchurchpriory.org](mailto:heidi@christchurchpriory.org)